

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT, M.S.P.A.

Contact

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Mission

The mission of the University of New England Physician Assistant Program is to prepare PAs who will provide compassionate, evidence-based, person-centered health care through interprofessional teams to people of all communities.

Vision

The UNE PA Program's vision is to become a recognized leader in northern New England for the education and training of high-quality PA healthcare providers. We strive to teach our graduates to become leaders and partners with all members of an interprofessional healthcare team.

Prepare our graduates to:

- Provide high-quality, patient-centered and evidence-based, equitable healthcare to diverse populations of patients.
- Work in rural, underserved, and geriatric populations, with an understanding of the special needs of these populations.
- Advocate for the health and social needs of patients and their communities, thereby addressing and overcoming health disparities and barriers, with the goal of finding innovative ways to develop healthier communities through provision of equitable care.

Core Values

Similar to the core values of the PA Profession, the UNE PA Program's values are:

- Excellence in Clinical Care – through education and lifelong learning.
- Integrity and Professionalism – as a PA and in providing patient care.
- Empathy – for patients, their families and the community.
Interprofessional Collaboration – as a member of the healthcare team.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – delivery of equitable, inclusive, patient-centered care to a diverse population of patients, with cultural humility.

Program Description

Our accredited PA program – the only PA program in Maine – operates on a 24-month, full-time calendar, beginning each May with a new entering class.

You begin patient care in your first year through our nationally recognized Interprofessional Geriatric Education Practicum, which pairs you with an elderly individual from the community whom you visit and evaluate. Through this experience, you enhance your medical knowledge, gain clinical skills, and develop a professional presence to carry into your clinical year.

Our M.S.P.A. degree curriculum is built upon a foundation of science and pathophysiology to foster understanding of disease processes

and clinical medicine. You receive instruction in pharmacology, learn evidence-based medicine theory, and work in small groups to develop the critical thinking skills required to address complex medical and surgical challenges.

By emphasizing all aspects of health care, including geriatrics, health promotion, disease prevention, pharmacology, and public health practice, we empower future physician assistants to work effectively in medical decision making and providing a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services.

What is a PA?

Physician Assistants (PAs) are highly trained and licensed medical professionals who practice medicine on a health care team in collaboration with a physician. They understand the value of successful teamwork in health care settings and have the ability to practice in all specialties of medicine. PAs are graduates of accredited PA educational programs who have passed a nationally certified board exam.

Other

The University of New England's M.S.P.A. program was designed according to the Essentials and Guidelines for an Accredited Educational Program for the Physician Assistant. The University of New England Physician Assistant Program is accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA).

Academic Policy

Course Add/Drop or Withdrawal Policy

Due to the standard curriculum sequence within the M.S.P.A. program, students are not allowed to add or drop courses. Students may not withdraw from an individual M.S.P.A. course, to do so indicates a complete withdrawal from the M.S.P.A. Program.

Repeat Course Policy

Courses in the M.S.P.A. program are offered once per year. All courses within the program must be completed with a minimum final grade of at least 74%. Students must successfully complete each course within a given semester to progress to the next semester. If the student does not pass the course, they may be given the opportunity to remediate the course by repeating the course the next time it is offered. An unsuccessful course remediation will result in dismissal from the program. If the student is successful at remediating the failed course and fails another course during their time in the program (two course failures), they will be dismissed. If the student has taken a leave of absence and fails the retaken course the following year, they will also be dismissed.

If the student is repeating a course due to a leave of absence or deceleration taken before that semester was completed, a new listing and assigned grade are placed on the student's transcript. The original course listing and grade remain on the student's transcript (e.g. Withdrawal, etc.). All courses are listed chronologically on the transcript by semester or academic period in which they are enrolled.

Please refer to the Westbrook College of Health Professions Graduate Progression Policy and Procedures (PDF) (<https://www.une.edu/pdfs/wchp-graduate-program-progression-policies-and-procedures/>) for further information regarding graduate program progression.

Transfer Credit

Transfer credit is not accepted or awarded.

Admissions

See Graduate Admissions (<https://catalog.une.edu/graduate/admissions/>) for more information.

Financial Information

Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees for subsequent years may vary. Other expenses include books and housing. Please consult this catalog's Financial Information (<https://catalog.une.edu/graduate/financial-information-graduate-programs/>) page for specific tuition and fees information.

Lab Fees

A fee is charged to cover the expenses for specific science courses (e.g., anatomy), certain specific course or program components (Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), evaluative testing, including the use of high-fidelity simulators, etc.), and an equipment fee for personal medical equipment.

Clinical Fee

The Clinical Fee is dispersed to clinical sites during the student's clinical year. It is an honorarium paid to the clinical site in appreciation for clinical training. While dispersed to clinical sites during the clinical year, to better equalize charges and award financial aid, a portion of the fee is billed to students during both the didactic and clinical year.

Tuition and fees are refunded per UNE policy. The refund policy can be found in the University Catalog section on Financial Information (<https://catalog.une.edu/graduate/financial-information-graduate-programs/>) for Graduate Programs.

Equipment

Students are required to have certain personal medical equipment. This equipment is group purchased (at a significant discount) for each entering class and the equipment is delivered to students during the first week of the program. Please do not purchase personal medical equipment from sources other than the program's group purchase.

Books

Students in the didactic phase can plan on spending approximately \$1,500 to \$2,000 on required textbooks if they wish for a hard copy. Most of the texts used in the program are available digitally via the UNE Library's Portal and can be accessed without additional expense.

Course syllabi and the program booklist may also include recommended books that students are not required to purchase but may wish to have as important reference materials.

Other Expenses

Students are responsible for expenses involved with travel, parking, living expenses, and meals.

Student Employment

The program discourages students from having outside employment while attending the PA program due to its rigorous academic requirements. If a student feels that it is necessary to work while in the program, it is advisable that the student inform their academic advisor. Students are not permitted to work for the program.

Financial Aid

Detailed information and applications are available on request from the Financial Aid Office. Call (207) 602-2342 or visit the Financial Aid website (<https://www.une.edu/sfs/>).

Curricular Requirements

Phase I of the Program of study consists of 61 credit hours in pre-clinical didactic coursework. The summer, fall, and spring terms include instruction in the fields of biomedical sciences, clinical medicine, public health, pharmacology, clinical assessment, anatomy, physiology, evidence-based medicine, ethics and professionalism, specialty disciplines, and geriatrics. 12 months of clinical rotations will take place upon successful completion of the didactic phase. The Program ends with a final week on campus, which provides a forum for the presentation of students' research projects to peers and faculty, offers assistance in preparing the graduating students for certification, and gives PA candidates an opportunity to integrate the didactic and clinical portions of their training in preparation for the Physician Assistant National Certification Exam (PANCE). The purpose of the catalog is to provide a comprehensive list of required courses. The Physician Assistant program can provide a degree map listing which courses should be taken in each stage of this timeline.

Code	Title	Hours
Program Required Courses		
PAC 503	Clinical Assessment I	2.5
PAC 509	Clinical Medicine I	1
PAC 519	Clinical Medicine II	8
PAC 533	Clinical Assessment III	3
PAC 543	Evidence Based Medicine I	1
PAC 545	Specialty Disciplines	7
PAC 546	Clinical Medicine III	6
PAC 547	Interdisc Geriatrics Ed Prog I	1
PAC 548	Principles of Bioscience	3
PAC 551	Intro to Public Health	1
PAC 554	Clinical Assessment II	3
PAC 555	Anatomy	5
PAC 556	Evidence Based Medicine II	0.5
PAC 559	Pharmacology I	3
PAC 560	Pharmacology II	3.5
PAC 561	Pharmacology III	3.5
PAC 564	Interdisc Geriatric Ed Prog II	2
PAC 565	Integrating Seminar I	3
PAC 582	Prof. & Eth. Issues for PA	1
PAC 585	Integrating Seminar II	3
PAC 614	Prep for Clinical Practice I	1
PAC 615	Prep for Clinical Practice II	1
PAC 616	Prep for Clinical Practice III	1
PAC 628	Clinical Therapeutics I	0.5
PAC 629	Clinical Therapeutics II	0.5
PAC 670	Clinical Practicum I	6
PAC 671	Clinical Practicum II	6
PAC 672	Clinical Practicum III	6
PAC 673	Clinical Practicum IV	6
PAC 674	Clinical Practicum V	6

PAC 675	Clinical Practicum VI	6
PAC 676	Clinical Practicum VII	6
PAC 677	Clinical Practicum VIII	6
Total Hours		113

Graduation Requirements

Students must complete all program requirements before the issuance of their Master of Science degree and the certificate of completion of the program.

Academic and Technical Standards

WCHP Academic Policies

The Department of Physician Assistant, the Westbrook College of Health Professions, and the University of New England are committed to offering a quality Physician Assistant education program that complies with the evaluative criteria of the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant. The program provides learning experiences to enable graduates to achieve the outcomes required for the practice of a Physician Assistant. Please refer to the WCHP Graduate Program Progression Policies and Procedures (PDF) (<https://www.une.edu/pdfs/wchp-graduate-program-progression-policies-and-procedures/>) for a detailed description of academic standards.

Technical Standards

A student in the PA Program must have abilities and skills in five (5) categories: observation, communication, motor, intellectual, and behavioral/social. All students admitted to the Program must meet the following abilities and expectations upon matriculation and maintain these standards while enrolled in the PA Program. In the event a student is unable to fulfill these technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, the student will be subject to dismissal after admission.

Reasonable accommodation for persons with documented disabilities will be considered on an individual basis. However, a candidate must be able to perform these skills in an independent manner. Accordingly, the program requires each student to meet the following technical standards with or without accommodation:

Observation

Students must have sufficient sensory capacity to observe in the lecture hall, the laboratory, the outpatient setting, and the patient's bedside. Sensory skills adequate to perform a physical examination are required. The ability to acquire sensory input using vision, hearing, and tactile sensation must be adequate to observe a patient's condition and to elicit information through procedures regularly required in a physical examination, such as inspection, auscultation, percussion, and palpation.

In any case, where a student's ability to observe or acquire information through these sensory modalities is compromised, the student must demonstrate alternative means and/or abilities to acquire and demonstrate the essential information without reliance upon another person's interpretation of the information. It is expected that obtaining and using such alternative means and/or abilities shall be the responsibility of the student. The University will reasonably assist the student where necessary.

Communication

The student must be able to effectively and efficiently communicate in the English language using verbal, written, and reading skills, in a manner

that demonstrates sensitivity to fellow students, patients, their families, and all members of the healthcare team.

- A student must be able to accurately elicit information, describe a patient's change in mood, thought, activity, and posture. Students must demonstrate established communication skills using traditional means which may include the use of assistive devices.
- The student must be able to communicate complex findings in appropriate terms for patients/caregivers and other members of the healthcare team.
- A student must be able to communicate clearly and audibly during interactions with classmates, professors, patients, and members of the healthcare team.
- A student must be able to receive, write legibly, and interpret written and verbal communication in both clinical and academic settings.
- The student must be able to interpret and record legibly observations in a manner that is efficient and accurate using handwritten and electronic and dictating formats.

Motor

The ability to participate in basic diagnostic and therapeutic maneuvers and procedures (e.g. palpation, percussion, auscultation) is required. Students must have sufficient motor function to safely execute movements required to provide care to patients. Students must be able to negotiate patient care environments and must be able to move between settings, such as clinic, classroom building, and hospital. Physical stamina sufficient to complete the rigorous course of didactic and clinical study is required. Long periods of sitting, standing, or moving are required in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical experiences.

The student must be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general and emergency diagnosis and medical care such as airway management, placement of intravenous catheters, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and suturing of wounds. At all times the ability to administer care to patients in a safe manner is paramount.

Intellectual

Students must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, and synthesize information effectively in a precisely limited time as would be appropriate for the individual's level of training in a given clinical setting, while under stress, and in an environment in which other distractions may be present. Problem-solving, one of the critical skills demanded of PAs, requires all of these intellectual abilities. In addition, students should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures.

Students must be able to read and understand medical literature. The student must be able to demonstrate mastery of these skills and the ability to use them together in a timely fashion in medical problem solving and patient care.

The student must be able to, with or without the use of assistive devices, but without reliance on another person, interpret x-ray, and other graphic images and digital or analog representations of physiologic phenomena (such as EKGs).

Behavioral and Social Attributes

Students must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and the prompt completion of all academic and patient care responsibilities. The development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients and other members of the healthcare team is essential. Flexibility, compassion, integrity, motivation, interpersonal skills, and the

ability to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in clinical practice are required.

Students must function professionally and effectively in any academic or clinical setting. Students must always demonstrate the psychological and emotional health required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and the prompt completion of all academic and clinical responsibilities.

The student must demonstrate mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with University faculty and professional staff, peers and classmates, patients, and other members of the healthcare team.

Flexibility, compassion, integrity, motivation, interpersonal skills, and the ability to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in clinical practice are all required.

For more information on disabilities and accommodation, please contact the UNE Student Access Center (<https://www.une.edu/student-affairs/life-une/division-student-affairs/student-access-center/>) at (207) 602-2815.

Grading

Upon completion of a course of study, the faculty member in charge of that course submits the number of hours taught and a grade for each student to the academic coordinator. The M.S.P.A. program uses a standard letter grading system.

Goals

The ongoing goals of the UNE PA Program are:

1. Recruit qualified applicants from variety of backgrounds.
2. Prepare physician assistants who demonstrate knowledge necessary to evaluate and treat patients with various medical conditions.
3. Apply principles of evidence-based medicine and patient centered care to clinical practice.
4. Exhibit professionalism and effective interpersonal communication
5. Encourage students to serve underserved populations.

Program Competencies

1. Knowledge for Practice

PA students must demonstrate core knowledge about established and evolving biomedical and clinical sciences and the application of this knowledge to patient care. In addition, PA students are expected to demonstrate an investigative and analytical thinking approach to clinical situations.

- Apply principles of clinical sciences to diagnose disease while utilizing therapeutic decision-making, clinical problem solving, and other evidence-based practice skills.
- Recognize among acute, chronic, and emergent disease states.
- Effectively utilize technology resources to improve quality and cost-effectiveness in health care.

2. Interpersonal and Communication Skills

PA students must demonstrate verbal, nonverbal and written communication skills that result in effective information exchange with patients, patients' families and health professionals.

- Communicate effectively with patients, their families, and health professionals to elicit and provide information.

- Accurately and adequately document medical information for clinical, legal, quality, and financial purposes.
- Conduct difficult conversations with sensitivity, compassion, and empathy.
- Deliver therapeutic communication and care in a culturally competent manner

3. Person-Centered Care

Person-centered care includes patient-specific and setting-specific assessment, evaluation and management. PA students must demonstrate care that is effective, safe, high-quality and equitable.

- Effectively obtain accurate and essential patient information through history-taking, physical examination, and diagnostic testing.
- Integrate knowledge of physiologic changes across the lifespan to provide person-centered evaluation and management
- Professionally counsel, educate, and empower patients and their families to participate in their care and enable shared decision-making.

4. Interprofessional Collaboration

Demonstrate the ability to engage with a variety of other healthcare professionals in a manner that optimizes safe, effective, person- and population-centered care.

- Communicate effectively with other health professionals to provide collaborative, person-centered care.
- Recognize the need to refer patients to other disciplines to ensure optimal care.

5. Professionalism and Ethics

PA students must demonstrate a high level of responsibility, ethical practice, sensitivity to a diverse patient population and adherence to legal and regulatory requirements.

- Demonstrate compassion, integrity, and empathy for others.
- Demonstrate understanding and responsiveness to all patient populations.
- Show commitment to ethical principles pertaining to collaborative, person-center care.
- Uphold ethical principles and compliance in business practices with relevant laws, policies, and regulations.

6. Practice-Based Learning and Quality Improvement

PA students must engage in critical appraisal of their own performance and analyze evidence-based resources for practice improvement and lifelong learning.

- Exhibit self-awareness to identify strengths, address deficiencies, and recognize limits in knowledge and expertise.
- Identify improvement goals and perform learning activities that address gaps in knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the business of the healthcare in delivery of cost-effective patient management

7. Society and Population Health

PA students must integrate knowledge of societal determinants of health to promote well-being of the individual and the community.

- Recognize the influence of socioeconomic, environmental, and other determinates on the health of the individual and community.